

A Guide to Reflection

Objectives

The reflection process adds a special dimension to the junior leader training conference. It helps the staff establish a safe haven, creating a special place where participants can experience Scouting at its best. The use of reflection at the conference has three specific objectives:

- To help participants learn from their experiences during the conference, to make sense of what they learn, and to reinforce the teaching process of experience and discovery
- To communicate to participants the staff's respect for them as individuals through a sincere in their thoughts and feelings
- To increase the staff's awareness of the status and progress of patrols and individual participants through direct feedback on their understanding of and reaction to conference activities

In addition, familiarity with the reflection process assists staff members in their own goal setting and evaluation, and in developing skill in counseling others. The reflection process also is useful in reinforcing an understanding of leadership skills and the process of leadership.

This "Guide to Reflection" contains the following sections:

Use of Reflection During the Junior Leader Training Conference
Leading the Reflection
A Model for Reflection
Using Games and Skill Events
Game Plan
Adapting Games and Skill Events
Observation of Group Activities
Reflection on Leadership Skills
Developing Questions for Reflection

Use of Reflection During the Conference

During the conference, reflection is used in various situations. Particular emphasis is given to reflecting on the eleven skills of leadership. By examining their own understanding, expressing feelings, and making judgments, participants have an opportunity to internalize what they are learning and make it their own.

The following is a brief overview of the reflections planned as part of the daily program at the junior leader training conference.

Reflections on Leadership Skills

Knowing and Using the Resources of the Group (part of presentation)

Communicating (after presentation and application)

Understanding the Needs and Characteristics of the Group (part of presentation)

Effective Teaching (part of presentation)

Representing the Group (part of presentation)

Evaluating (part of presentation)

Counseling (after presentation and application)

Planning (after presentation and application)

Controlling Group Performance (part of presentation)

Sharing Leadership (part of presentation)

Setting the Example (after presentation as part of personal goal setting)

Before the daily patrol meeting (generally at 1:00p.m.), a staff member leads a reflection on the leadership skill presented that morning.

Patrol and Troop Initiative Games -- Day Two

The objective of this activity is to explore the reflection process with participants through a series of patrol games followed by reflection. Games are organized and led by youth staff members. The patrols are separated by some distance so that they cannot observe each other.

Staff members observe the patrol during the activity and note any actions and behaviors that might be useful in the reflection process. At the conclusion of each game, the youth staff member calls the patrol together and leads a reflection on the activity just completed. Reflections are limited to approximately 10 minutes.

At the conclusion of the patrol games, the senior patrol leader sums up the experience and shares with the participants the concept of Scouting as a game with a purpose.

Participant Scoutcraft Skills Presentations using Effective Teaching -- Day Three

Each participant makes a short, prepared presentation on a Scout skill, applying the steps he has learned in effective teaching. Presentations are made in a patrol setting. A youth staff member works with the group and leads an evaluation on each presentation. When all presentations have been completed, the staff member leads a reflection on the experience.

Scoutmaster's Reflection -- Day Three

The Scoutmaster meets individually with each patrol and leads a reflection focused on participant's impressions and feelings about the conference to this point. The Scoutmaster asks them about their expectations of the conference and how they hope to apply what they have learned. This activity may be shared with an Assistant Scoutmaster.

Pioneering Projects -- Day Four

After completion of the pioneering project, a staff member leads a reflection on the project with the patrol. The staff member has spent time observing the patrol working together on the project. Questions based on the patrol's performance should be thought through in advance. This is an opportunity for participants to relate a number of leadership skills to their actual experience in working together on a large project.

Outpost Hike -- Day Six

The outpost hike is a "peak" experience for the patrol. On its return the patrol is met by the troop guide at the patrol site. The troop guide leads a reflection on the outpost hike and helps patrol members sum up their experience.

Scoutmaster's Reflection -- Day Six

The Scoutmaster meets individually with each patrol and leads a reflection focused on the lessons patrol members learned from their experiences at the junior leader training conference. The reactions and feeling of the participants should be shared with the group. Scouting values and the lessons of working together should be discussed. Finally, questions should focus on using what they have learned when they return home.

Note: Reflections generally should run 5 to 10 minutes. Leadership skill discussions might run 15 minutes but certainly no more. Keep them short and to the point.

Leading the Reflection

Lay the Ground Rules for Discussion

Have participants sit so they can see each other and ask them to agree not to interrupt or make fun of each other. Let them know they are free to keep silent if they wish.

Facilitate the Discussion

As a leader, avoid the temptation to talk about your own experiences. Reserve judgment about what the participants say to avoid criticizing them. Help the discussion get going, then let the Scouts take over with limited guidance from you. If you describe what they saw, be sure that your comments do not stop the Scouts from adding their own thoughts. Above all, be positive. Have fun with the activity and with the session.

Use Thought-Provoking Questions

The following types of questions are useful in reflecting:

- **Open-ended questions** avoid yes and no answers. “What was the purpose of the game? What did you learn about yourself?”
- **Feeling questions** require Scouts to reflect on how they feel about what they did. “How did it feel when you started to pull together?”
- **Judgment questions** ask Scouts to make decision about things. “What was the best part?” or “was it a good idea?”
- **Guiding questions** steer the Scouts toward the purpose of the activity and keep the discussion focused. “What got you all going in the right direction?”
- **Closing questions** help the Scouts draw conclusions and end the discussion. “What did you learn? What would you do differently?”

Remember, reflecting on an activity should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes. The more you do it, the easier it becomes for both you and the Scouts. Remember that the value and the values of Scouting often lie beneath the surface. Reflection helps you ensure that these values come through to Scouts.

A Model for Reflection

Discuss what happened. Direct open-ended questions toward a specific incidents. For example, you might ask “Who took leadership? What did they do to make them a leader?” or “How did decisions get made?”

Make a judgment. Ask the group to decide if what happened is good or bad. Try to focus on the good things first. Direct your attention toward specific skills. For example, you could ask, “What was good about the way decisions were made?” Then you could ask. “What didn’t work so well about the way you made decisions?”

Generalize the experience. Try to get the Scouts to see the connection between the game and regular troop experiences. You could ask, “How can we use the ideas we learned today in our own troops?” if you can, be more specific. “How can we use what we learned about decision making on a troop campout?”

Set goals. Begin with the positive. Ask the Scouts what skills they used today that they would like to keep doing. Then ask what things they need to change to work together better.

Using Games and Skill Events

Consider these steps in playing games, Scoutcraft events, or cooperative activities.

Be Prepared

- *Familiarize yourself with the activity* you have chosen. Know how the game is played, what the objectives are, and how its parts lead to the learning objective.
- *Plan a strategy* ahead of time so you can help Scouts if they get into trouble with the game.
- *Figure out space and equipment requirements.* If you're planning an activity for a large group, try it ahead of time in a small group to avoid last-minute snags.
- *Think of some questions* you can use in reflecting following the activity. Jot down some notes. That way each activity has a few questions to get you started. In planning a game of skill event, use a game plan.

Present the Game

- *Make the rules clear.* Be sure the Scouts understand the problem they must solve or the skill to be learned before they begin. Emphasize that there should be no put-downs or harassment during the activity.
- *Stand back.* Let the Scouts solve the problem themselves. Even though you may know a better solution, let them figure it out for themselves. They will learn the most from an experience they have worked through on their own.
- *Observe.* Look for processes that help the group accomplish the task: leadership, decision making, planning, effective following, and evaluation. Note processes that help relationships in the group; encouragement, expressions of concern, listening, soliciting ideas, building consensus, trust, etc.

Lead the Reflection

Use the guidelines for leading a reflection and try to follow the model for reflection, but do not follow the process rigidly. Remember: "Keep it simple, make it fun."

Evaluate

After you lead a reflection, pause for a few minutes and evaluate what you have done. Think in terms of the "job" and the "group." You know the questions to ask yourself. Always remember that a key objective of evaluating is to improve performance.

Game Plan

Title: _____

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Objective: _____

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Procedures:

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Rules: _____

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Reflection:

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Materials: _____

Adapting Games and Skill Events

Using your own resources, you can adapt many games and Scout skill events to a cooperative format. This points out how all kinds of activities can be enhanced through reflection. Just follow the Game Plan format.

Title: Something creative, funny, or intriguing pertaining to the activity.

Objective: A simple one- or two-line description of the objective.

Procedure: A straight forward description of how the event should happen, written in a manner easy for Scouts to understand. (There's no need to be overly detailed considering the nature of the activity.)

Rules: Limit rules. The rules should be safety guidelines and not restrictions on the activity whenever possible.

Scoring: Provide scoring criteria only for Scout skill events. Initiative games are not scored. The scoring should encourage participation and establish attainable goals for all participants.

Reflection: Provide the leader with a starting point for reflection. There should be six to twelve specific questions.

Materials: Provide a complete list of equipment or materials required.

Observation of Group Activities

In observing a group, there are some processes you can look for that will help you in preparing to lead a reflection, to "process" an experience, or to evaluate the group's effectiveness. By thoughtful observation of group activities, you can often zero in on actions and issues that form a useful basis for reflection.

Getting the Job Done

Leadership

- Who is the leader and what makes him one?

Decision Making

- How did decisions get made?

Planning

- Did the group members prepare adequately before they started?
- How did they plan and prepare?

Effective Following

- In what ways were people followers?
- What are the characteristics of a good follower?

Evaluating Progress

- Did group members evaluate how they were doing during the activity?
- How did they evaluate?

Keeping the Group Together

Encouragement

- Were group members supportive?

Expressions of Concern

- Did group members express concern for the emotional and physical health of all the members?

Listening Skills

- What listening skills were used?

Soliciting Ideas

- How did members actively encourage everyone to contribute to the eventual solution?

Building Consensus

- Did members try to get everyone committed to the eventual solution before trying it?

Trust

- Did members trust each other? How?
- How did they show their trust?

Equal Participation

- Were tasks equally shared?

Appropriate Use of Power and Influence

- Did people use their power in way that worked well in solving the problem and in respecting individuals?
- What kind of power did you see used in this activity?

Willingness to Disagree

- Were people willing to disagree? Why or why not?

- Why is it important to be able to disagree?

Reflection on Leadership Skills

Preparing for the Reflection

Review the leadership skill presentation. You should use the key points as references in the reflection.

Leading the Reflection

Gather the patrol members. Have everyone sit so they face each other. You should join the group. Do not stand while they sit. This is not a presentation but a discussion, and you are part of the process. review the ground rules for reflection. (See "Leading the Reflection.")

Step to Follow -- Questions for Reflection

Consider the following steps in leading a reflection on leadership skills.

1. Ask the patrol members to restate the most important points on the leadership skill in their own words. Try to ensure that all patrol members understand the main points. Guide the discussion so that all the main points are covered and are translated into everyday Scout language without losing the meaning.

Questions might include

- Can someone describe the most important points in this morning's leadership skill presentation?
- Can you put that into your own words? (For the "parrots" in the group)
- What do you think we mean when we say . . . ?
- What do you think we mean by . . . ?
- Does that make sense to you? How? Why?
- Does someone else see that differently? How? Why?
- Can you put that into different words that make it easier for you to understand?
- Why is that important?

2. Ask the patrol members to describe their feeling and reactions about using the skill.

Questions might include

- How do you feel when you tried to use the skill?
- How did you feel as a member of the group when the leader was trying to use the skill?
- How can a follower -- a group member -- help the leader in learning to use a new skill? How do you feel about that as a follower? As a leader?
- What is the best part of this skill? How do you think it could be useful in working with your patrol?
- What is the most difficult part of the skill? Why? How could you make it easier to use the skill?

3. Ask the patrol members to suggest ways the skill could be applied at the junior leader training

conference and in their own troop back home. Get them to be specific about their examples. Try to make sure all patrol members understand the example. Questions might include

- Describe a way you could apply this skill in your patrol here at the junior leader training conference.
 - What are some examples of ways you could apply this skill with your troop back home?
4. Suggest that each patrol member jot down the ideas that could be useful in their own troop. Also suggest they think about these ideas and then put two or three of them down as part of their personal conference goals.
 5. Ask the patrol members how they feel about the subject covered in the leadership skill. Do they understand? Can they see how to apply it? Ask one or two patrol members (who seem to understand) to sum up what we have learned.

And do all of the above in no more than 10 to 15 minutes.

Developing Questions for Reflections

(This material has been adapted from Clifford E. Knapp, *Idea Notebook, Designing Processing Questions to Meet Specific Needs*. Dr. Knapp is an associate professor of education at Northern Illinois University.)

Our ultimate goal at the junior leader training conference is to help participants learn from their experiences. Scouts should understand how to apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they have learned at the conference to real situations in Scouting and in their own lives.

Staff members can improve their ability to process or debrief experiences by being clear about their objectives and by planning careful strategies to meet them.

Processing is a method for helping people reflect on their experiences and facilitating specific personal changes in their lives. The skill of processing primarily involves observing individuals, making assessments about what is happening, and then asking appropriate questions.

There are many personal and group growth objectives that can be achieved through the junior leader training conference. If the staff member has one or more of these objectives in mind, the observations, assessments, and reflection questions may be better directed toward achieving these ends. The underlying assumption is that if the staff member and the participants know where to go and how to get there, the participant is more likely to arrive.

The following questions, organized by specific objectives and behaviors, are designed to help staff members more effectively lead reflections on experiences for personal and group growth.

Communicating Effectively

1. Can anyone give an example of when he though he communicated effectively with someone else in the group? (Consider verbal and nonverbal communication.)
2. How did you know that what you communicated was understood? (Consider different types of feedback.)
3. Who didn't understand someone's attempt to communicate?
4. What went wrong in the communication attempt?
5. What could the communicator do differently next time to send a clearer message?

6. What could the message receiver do differently next time to understand the message?
7. How many different way were used to communicate messages?
8. Which ways were most effective? Why?
9. Did you learn something about communication that will be helpful later? If so, what?
- 10.
- 11.

Expressing Appropriate Feelings

1. Can you name a feeling you had at any point in completing the activity? (Consider mad, glad, sad, or scared.) Where in your body did you feel it most?
2. What personal beliefs were responsible for generating that feeling? (What was the main thought behind the feeling?)
3. Is that feeling a common one in your life?
4. Did you express that feeling to others? If not, what did you do with the feeling?
5. Did you usually express feelings or suppress them?
6. Would you like to feel differently in a similar situation? If so, how would you like to feel?
7. What beliefs would you need to have in order to feel differently in a similar situation? Could you believe them?
8. How do you feel about the conflict that may result from expressing certain feelings?
9. How do you imagine others felt toward you at various times during the activity? Where these feelings expressed?
10. What types of feelings are easiest to express? What types were most difficult to express?
11. Do you find it difficult to be aware of some feelings at times? If so, which ones?
12. Are some feelings not appropriate to express to the group at times? If so, which ones?
13. What feelings were expressed nonverbally in the group?
14. Does expressing appropriate feelings help or hinder completion of the initiative?

Deferring Judgment of Others

1. Is it difficult for you to avoid judging others? Explain.
2. Can you think of examples of when you judged others in the group? Today? When you didn't judge others?
3. What were some advantages to you of not judging others?
4. What were some advantages to others of your not judging them?
5. How does judging and not judging others affect the completion of the activity?
6. Were some behaviors of others easy not to judge and other behaviors difficult?
7. Would deferring judgment be of some value in other situations? Explain.
8. Can you think of any disadvantages of not judging others in this situation?

Listening

1. Who made suggestions for completing the activity?
2. Were all these suggestions heard? Explain.
3. Which suggestions were acted upon?
4. Why were the other suggestions ignored?
5. How did it feel to be heard when you made a suggestion?

6. What interfered with your ability to listen to others?
7. How can this interference be overcome?
8. Did you prevent yourself from listening well? How?
9. Did you listen in the same way today as you generally do? If not, what was different about today?

Leading Others

1. Who assumed leadership roles during the activity?
2. What were the behaviors that you described as showing leadership?
3. Can everyone agree that these behaviors are traits of leaders?
4. How did the group respond to these leadership behaviors?
5. Who followed the leader even if he wasn't sure that the idea would work? Why?
6. Did the leadership role shift to other people during the activity? Who though he was taking the leadership role? How did you do it?
7. Was it difficult to assume a leadership role with this group?
8. Why didn't some of you take a leadership role?
9. Is it easier to take a leadership role in other situations or with different group members? Explain.
10. Did anyone try to lead the group, but feels he was unsuccessful? What were some possible reasons for this? How did it feel to be disregarded?

Following Others

1. Who assumed a follower role at times throughout the activity? How did it feel?
2. How did it feel to follow different leaders?
3. Do you consider yourself a good follower? Was this an important role in the group today? Explain.
4. How does refusal to follow affect the leadership role?
5. What are the traits of a good follower?
6. How can you improve your ability to follow in the future?

Making Group Decisions

1. How were group decisions made in completing the activity?
2. Were you satisfied with the ways decisions were made? Explain.
3. Did the group arrive at any decisions through group consensus? (Some didn't get their first choice, but they could live with the decision.)
4. Were some decisions made by one or several individuals?
5. Did everyone in the group express an opinion when a choice was available? If not, why not?
6. What is the best way for this group to make decisions? Explain.
7. Do you respond in similar ways in other groups?
8. What did you like about how the group made decisions? What didn't you like?

Cooperating

1. Can you think of specific examples of when the group cooperated in completing the activity? Explain.

2. How did it feel to cooperate?
3. Do you cooperate in most things you do?
4. How did you learn to cooperate?
5. What are the rewards of cooperating?
6. Are there any problems associated with cooperation?
7. How did cooperative behavior lead to successful completion of this activity?
8. How can you cooperate in other area of your life?
9. Did you think anyone was blocking the group from cooperating? Explain.

Respecting Human Differences

1. How are you different from some of the others in the group?
2. How do these differences strengthen the group as a whole?
3. When do differences in people in a group prevent reaching certain objectives?
4. What would this group be like if there were very few differences in people? How would you feel if this were so?
5. In what instances did being different help and hinder the group members in reaching their objectives?

Respecting Human Commonalties

1. How are you like some of the others in the group?
2. Were these commonalties a help to the group in completing its task? Explain.
3. Were these commonalties a hindrance to the group in completing its task? Explain.
4. Do you think you have other things in common with some of the group members?
5. How did this setting help you discover how you are similar to others?

Trusting the Group

1. Can you give examples of when you trusted someone in the group? Explain.
2. Is it easier to trust some people and not others? Explain.
3. Can you think of examples when trusting someone might not have been a good idea?
4. How do you increase your level of trust for someone?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate how much trust you have in the group as a whole. Can you explain your rating?
6. What did you do today that deserves the trust of others?
7. How does the amount of fear you feel affect your trust of others?

Closure Questions

1. What did you learn about yourself?
2. What did you learn about others?
3. How do you feel about yourself and others?
4. What new questions do you have about yourself and others?
5. What did you do today that you are particularly proud of?
6. What skill are you working to improve?
7. Was your behavior today typical of the way you usually act in groups? Explain.

- 8.** How can you use what you learned in other life situations?
- 9.** What beliefs about yourself and others were reinforced today?
- 10.** Would you do anything differently if you are starting the activity again with this group?
- 11.** What would you like to say to the group members?

